DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 555 SP 030 716

AUTHOR	Gomez, Mary Louise; And Others
TITLE	The National Writing Project: Creating Community, Validating Experience, and Expanding Professional Opportunities. Issue Paper 88-2.
INSTITUTION	National Center for Research on Teacher Education, East Lansing, MI.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Aug 88
NOTE	48p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 116 Erickson Hall, College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Development; *Group Dynamics; *Institutes (Training Programs); Participant Satisfaction; Program Effectiveness; *Summer Programs; *Teacher Attitudes; Writing (Composition); *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*National Writing Project

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the National Writing Project model as it relates to enhancing the professionalism of teachers. It traces the historical development of the National Writing Project (NWP). describes the practices of the NWP summer institutes, and provides an analysis of teachers' satisfaction with their experiences in the summer institutes. Three key features of the project are explored as sources of teachers' enthusiastic support of the NWP: the creation of a community of learners who are all concerned with the effective teaching of writing; the validation of practitioners' lore; and the enhancement and expansion of professional opportunities available to classroom teachers following participation in the summer institute. Modifications of the curricula and organization of summer institues are suggested. Particular attention is focused on developing action research plans by teachers in all NWP-sponsored summer institutes. The paper is followed by responses from James Gray, director of the California and National Writing projects, and Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman, co-directors of the Illinois Writing Project. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED301555

4.0

Issue Paper 88-2

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT: CREATING COMMUNITY, VALIDATING EXPERIENCE, AND EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Louise Gomez

NCRTE

National Center for Research on Teacher Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. L. Gomez

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP 030 716

Sponsored by the United States Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Issue Paper 88-2

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT: CREATING COMMUNITY, VALIDATING EXPERIENCE, AND EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Louise Gomez

With responses by
James Gray
Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman

Published by

The National Center Research on Teacher Education
116 Erickson Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034

August 1988

This work is sponsored in part by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education, College of Education, Michigan State University. The National Center for Research on Teacher Education is funded primarily by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily represent the position, policy, or endorsement of the Office or the Department.

National Center for Research on Teacher Education

The National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NCRTE) was founded at Michigan State University in 1985 by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

The NCRTE is committed to improving teacher education through research on its purposes, its character and quality, and its role in teacher learning. NCRTE defines teacher education broadly and includes in its portfolio such diverse approaches as preservice, inservice, and induction programs and alternate routes to teaching.

To further its mission, the NCRTE publishes research reports, issue papers, technical series, conference proceedings, and a newsletter on contemporary issues in teacher education. For more information about the NCRTE or to be placed on its mailing list, please write to the Editor, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, 516 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034.

Director:	Mary M. Kennedy
Associate Directors:	Sharon Feiman-Nemser Robert E. Floden G. Williamson McDiarmid
Editor:	Sandra Gross

Many papers published by the NCRTE are based on the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach Study, a single multisite longitudinal study. The researchers who have contributed to this study are listed below:

Marianne Amarel
Deborah Loewenberg Ball
Monica Boswell
Joyce Cain
Sandra Callis
Barbara Camilleri
Anne Chang
David K. Cohen
Ada Beth Cutler
Ann Frisch
Mary L. Gomez
Ann Hansen
Frank Jenkins
Samgeon Kwon
Magdalene Lampert
Perry Lanier
Glenda Lappan
Sarah McCarthey
James Mead
Susan Melnick
Arden Moon
James Mosenthal
Gary Natriello
Barbara Neufeld
Lynn Paine
Michelle Parker
Richard Prawat
Trish Stoddart
M. Teresa Tatto
Suzanne Wilson
Lauren Young
Kenneth M. Zeichner
Karen K. Zumwalt

Abstract

This paper explores the National Writing Project model as it relates to enhancing the professionalism of teachers. It traces the historical development of the National Writing Project (NWP), describes the practices of the NWP summer institutes, and provides an analysis of teachers' satisfaction with their experiences in the summer institutes. Three key features of the project are explored as sources of teachers' enthusiastic support of the NWP: the creation of a community of learners who are all concerned with the effective teaching of writing, the validation of practitioners' lore, and the enhancement and expansion of professional opportunities available to classroom teachers following participation in the summer institute. Modifications of the curricula and organization of summer institutes are suggested. Particular attention is focused on developing action research plans by teachers in all NWP-sponsored summer institutes.

The paper is followed by responses from James Gray, director of the California and National Writing projects, and Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman, co-directors of the Illinois Writing Project.

THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT: CREATING COMMUNITY, VALIDATING EXPERIENCE, AND EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mary Louise Gomez[1]

> With me it was being treated as a professional . . . that I knew something, had something to share. When you meet writing project participants, it's like going to meet my old army company. You can go anywhere in the country, and I've been fortunate to go to a number of places with the writing project, and you see the same sort of spirit--the missionary spirit in the almost evangelical spirit that would become dangerous maybe . . . the same respect because you know that person has gone through the same five weeks of emotional, physical drain. There's the common bond and the feeling we're doing something important. (Teacher consultant in the Bay Area Writing Project)

The creation of community, the validation of the classroom teacher's experiences, and the expansion of opportunities to share those experiences in valued ways with fellow teachers are three emerging themes from the talk of teacher participants of the summer institutes of the National Writing Project (NWP).[2]

This paper examines the National Writing Project model as it relates to enhancing the professionalism of teachers. Teacher participants in the summer institutes of National Writing Project sites enthusiastically report finding a community of like-minded teachers committed to students and teaching and writing. This paper explores these teacher reports and attempts

---

[1]Mary Louise Gomez is the associate director of the Wisconsin Writing Project. She is also assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a senior researcher with the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. The author wishes to thank Mary Kennedy, director, and Robert Floden, associate director, of the NCRTE at Michigan State University for their insightful comments on the manuscript.

[2]The Bay Area Writing Project, begun in 1974 in the communities surrounding San Francisco, is the seed and model project of a network of writing projects in the United States and six foreign nations. This network is referred to as the National Writing Project or NWP. Its purpose is to provide staff development in the teaching of writing for teachers from grade school through secondary school.

to locate the roots of their discourse in the organization and the practices of the National Writing Project. Further, the paper offers suggested modifications to the curricula and organization of NWP-sponsored summer institutes. The focus of these modifications lies in redirecting attention from a process model and staff development presentations to exploring the literature on methods of research (including action research) in composition, the history of teaching composition, and staff development. Further, the activities of the institute, whether they are writing, reading, discussions, or presentations, need to be firmly grounded in the needs, problems, and interests of the teacher participants, their local classrooms, and school districts. Sharing and meshing the tools of the academy with those of the classroom will further enhance NWP teachers' abilities to provide successful composition experiences for all children.

Data were collected from several sources. First, I was a participant observer in the summer institutes of the Wisconsin Writing Projects in 1981, 1983, and 1987. I interviewed 10 teachers participating in the most recent Wisconsin institute in June 1987. Then, in December 1986 I interviewed Bay Area Writing Project staff including James Gray, founder of the Bay Area Writing Project and director of the California and National Writing Projects; Mary Anne Smith, director of the Bay Area Writing Project; and Rebekah Caplan, co-director of the Bay Area Writing Project; and nine teacher consultants (a term used by the Bay Area Writing Project staff to connote those who offer inservice for other teachers). I interviewed all those listed above (in 1986-87) using interview guides prepared at the National Center for Research on Teacher Education of Michigan State University (McDiarmid and Ball, 1987).

The Bay Area Writing Project honors both the lore of the practitioner (North, 1987) and the ability of teachers to communicate effective practices to one another. That lore celebrated and shared by the Bay Area and National Writing Projects embraces a process model of teaching composition.[3] Together, the organization of the model and the tenets of the model provide a compelling framework and fellowship for teachers.

Development of and popular attention to the process or natural process (Hillocks, 1986) or expressive model (Gere, 1986) of teaching composition in Great Britain and the United States has been traced (Emig, 1982) to four sets of events occurring between 1966 and 1971. These include the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English held at Dartmouth College in the summer of 1966; the publication of two works by James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (1968) and A Student-Centered Language Arts Curriculum (1973); the first publication of work from the London Schools Council Project by James Britton, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen (1975); and the beginnings of a shift in composition research from a product to a process orientation marked by the 1971 publication of Janet Emig's The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders. The roots of the process model may further be traced to Dewey and others working within the progressive education movement of the early part of this century.

In the years preceding these events and in the decade to follow, James Gray was involved in three projects involving staff development in the teaching of English composition. These projects included the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) Institute, the Area Three English Project of

---

[3]Process models of teaching composition are generally recognized as embracing a recursive writing cycle with periods of prewriting, revising, and editing.

the state of California (held in 11 counties for eight years in the 1960s with Gray as chief consultant), and the English Teacher Specialist Program in California (a two-year program Gray planned).

Each of these uniquely contributed to Gray's planning of the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP). He felt that while the NDEA institutes were selective in inviting participants, the program was one of top-down dissemination of information to teachers. A further weakness of the NDEA design was that teacher involvement in the project ceased when the program ended at the close of summer. He noted the weakness of the Area Three English Project in California as its lack of university-school collaboration. Further, while the English Teacher Specialist program attempted to replicate the Area Three project, it ran out of funding after two years and was "too big to handle by one office in Sacramento" (Phone interview, 1985). This program had involved two hundred teachers trained under the auspices of the California Department of Education.

Gray has also cited his experiences as a classroom teacher in the 1950s and his early faculty years at the University of California-Berkeley as influencing his development of the BAWP model. Gray recalled the anger he felt as a classroom teacher when university professors made negative statements regarding classroom practice while lacking information regarding excellence existing in the schools. He has termed this the "arrogance of academics," adding, "In my gut was planted the seed to recognize teacher expertise--that special kind of knowledge which comes out of practice, that is more important than research--the kind of knowledge teachers get from practice . . . they demonstrate to others how to do the things they do" (Phone interview, 1985). Gray also recalled his early faculty years at

Berkeley as a time when many teachers called for ongoing support in teaching writing, a support that did not exist in California at that time.

These experiences combined to cause Gray and Cap Lavin to found the Bay Area Writing Project, the seed and model project of the National Writing Project, which now offers numerous staff development opportunities to teachers. The Bay Area Writing Project annually operates three summer inservice programs: one five-week invitational institute, one five-week "open" institute, and a small specialized institute for secondary teachers of advanced composition. Whereas any teacher may enroll in the Bay Area Open Institute, the invitational institute requires nomination by another teacher or an administrator, a formal letter of application, and a one-hour interview with Gray, Director Smith, and Co-director Caplan. The BAWP staff report that from 100 to 120 teachers are nominated annually. Forty-four are interviewed and 20 selected for participation in the invitational institute each summer. The project staff attempts to include teachers from the primary grades through college, minority teachers, and nonminority teachers who work with minority and low socioeconomic status students.

A third, smaller BAWP summer program is a two-week institute for 10 to 15 senior high school teachers of advanced composition. This summer program was developed in response to the high numbers (41% in 1977) of entering Berkeley freshmen required to enroll in Subject-A, a remedial composition course. The Bay Area Writing Project offers these teachers $200 stipends to participate in the program. Participating teachers are trained as if they were to become Subject-A level English instructors at the University.

Affiliate sites of the National Writing Project conduct varying approximations of this model at their individual locations. For example, the Wisconsin Writing Project (WWP) has held 10 open institutes (with a maximum

enrollment of 30) and one summer of both open and invitational to past participants institutes. Until 1983, the teachers participating in the WWP summer institutes all came from school districts which agreed to send three participants, one each from an elementary, middle, and secondary teaching assignment, and to allow the teachers released time in the ensuing year to offer inservice to others. For many years, the Madison Metropolitan School District offered stipends to enrolling WWP teachers and screened the numerous Madison teachers applying prior to awarding that individual funding. The Wisconsin Writing Project offered $200 stipends to teachers over the years; however, these stipends are no longer funded. The WWP does offer scholarships to some teachers. In 1987, it awarded $125 scholarships to 16 of the 26 participating teachers. The 1987 Wisconsin Writing Project teachers represented 17 school districts, three of which offered some financial aid to participants.

Creating A Professional Community

The National Writing Project advertises that teachers can expect to improve their writing instruction (Bay Area Writing Project Staff, 1983). But the unadvertised benefits of a sense of community and expanded professional opportunities may be even more important to the participants. Teaching has been called lonely work (Sarason, Levine, Goldenberg, Cherlin, and Bennett, 1966) and an uncertain profession (Lortie, 1975), a profession in need of a sense of collegiality and of group affiliation (Griffin, 1986). The National Writing Project appears to respond to the loneliness, uncertainty, and need for affiliation.

For instance, the Bay Area secondary science teacher whose words appear at the beginning of this essay nearly left teaching prior to his participation in two Bay Area summer institutes and a National Writing

Project-sponsored summer writing institute in Great Britain. He reported that these experiences tied together notions of process in science and in writing in a setting where he was treated as a "professional." Another veteran teacher of students in poor, urban Bay Area schools echoed this teacher's sentiments. She recalled years of feeling isolated prior to her involvement in the National Writing Project, yet in the summer of her attendance at the institute felt she had "finally found a place."

The specialness often was expressed by my interviewees in terms of the feeling of professionalism and the sense of belonging to a community of teachers. The camaraderie of the Wisconsin institute participants in the summer of 1987 provided particular support for one teacher very anxious about returning to university work in her eighteenth year of teaching. She had set a goal of becoming a teacher educator in a small college near her hometown, so she left her family for eight weeks to attend the Wisconsin Writing Project summer institute and take one other course to begin her doctorate. Following the institute, she and the author unexpectedly met on campus.

Joyce[4] expressed some reservations about the other course in which she was enrolled and cited the writing project as a comparison. She talked of the memorable conversations with other teachers "who all cared about the same, one thing--teaching writing and kids." Joyce viewed the common focus of the teachers as that which created bonds for the participants. While other teachers cited varying aspects of the summer institute as critical to their feelings of belonging, all those interviewed talked of the potency of the group experience.

---

[4]Pseudonym.

Another teacher found a nurturing environment in the BAWP summer institute and referred to the group as a fraternity of teachers. He explained,

> It's the only thing in teaching I've ever found that never let me down. The people never let me down. . . . The ideas continue to be valid and are even more so. . . . It's just something you can grow with. And I didn't experience that professional growth just within my district until I connected with the writing project.

This word "professional" echoes throughout the current literature concerning teacher education. The professionalization of teaching has been termed the most pressing problem facing American education today (Darling-Hammond, 1985). It is certainly a word found frequently on the lips of those who teach. Their concern for one element of that emerging professionalism, a sense of community with others involved in a similar enterprise, resounds in the ears of their listeners.

The voices of the teachers cited here echo those of others interviewed who talked of isolation, disillusionment, and lack of stimulation prior to their participation in a National Writing Project summer institute. Community, for these teachers, was partially composed of the opportunity to interact with like-minded others, people with similar interests and commitments. Like Joyce, who participated in the Wisconsin institute, the Bay Area teachers felt that the common focus enhanced their professional lives. This support continues as the Bay Area Writing Project provides on-going help for its members through its monthly Saturday morning meetings where institute participants and others hold sessions concerning the teaching of writing. While nominally offering inservice to any Bay Area teacher and serving as a forum for presenters to try out their talks and workshops, these Saturday sessions maintain members' ties to the BAWP community.

The opportunity to meet regularly was important for my interviewees. Also significant were their perceptions of the quality of mind and

characteristics of those who compose the peer group. Institute participants used a language of acclaim when describing their colleagues in the National Writing Project. Words of praise such as "exemplary," "articulate," "innovative," "patient," "strong," "impressive," "sensitive," "creative," "risk-taking," "enthusiastic," "open," "high-powered," "humble," "flexible," and "tolerant" were used to describe the membership of the community of which they are a part.

Teachers talked about their project peers as having particular qualities of character and mind which set them apart from others. One Bay Area teacher, a participant in the first BAWP summer institute, recalled her colleagues from that group as "impressive; they are writers and editors. Not only impressive, but a kind of frightening group of people." She reflected, like others, on the special, powerful aura of the people selected for the summer institute.

How might one define the community these teachers found? Effrat (1974) distinguishes three differing notions of community common to North Americans and Britons: The first equates community with institutions or domains of society which function to produce unity, for example, families, voluntary organizations, residential groups; the second envisions community as interaction based in face-to-face informal relationships; and the third envisions community as distinct groups of people who interact in "overlapping friendship networks," such as the "Jet Set."

The National Writing Project appears to serve functions for teachers common to all of the above-described conceptions of community. The project provides a sense of unity or solidarity with like-minded others in a way similar to fraternal organizations like the Elks, Eagles, or campus fraternities and sororities. Membership in such a group readily identifies

the individual as appearing to have particular allegiances, qualities of mind, behaviors, or as adhering to certain creeds or rituals. The language of NWP institute participants reflects notions of membership in an elite group with very selective and rigorous membership qualifications. One teacher talked about the numbers of persons who applied to the Bay Area invitational summer institutes:

> In the beginning [of the summer institute], teachers are skeptical, busy and tired. They are anxious because the reputation is they are the best. It's the big time; you are nervous. . . . Hundreds of people are not accepted; they interview more than 50 each time.

Gray characterized institute participants interviewed by me as representative of "only the tip of the iceberg" in terms of Bay Area teaching talent. He, too, emphasized the large numbers of persons desirous of participating in the invitational summer institute and the numbers turned away due to size constraints. Gray cited the rigorous selection procedures devised to screen these large numbers of applicants.

These hierarchical sifting procedures appear to serve a ritual function by acknowledging the special character and quality of the work of the chosen practitioners. Ritual is a diffuse term used in varied ways by researchers working in differing traditions. McLaren (1986) defines ritualization as

> a process which involves the incarnation of symbols, symbol clusters, metaphors, and root paradigms through formative bodily gesture. As forms of enacted meaning rituals enable social actors to frame, negotiate, and articulate their phenomenological existence as social, cultural, and moral beings. (p. 48)

One of the BAWP leadership staff referred to the group chosen each year as "chiefs" or "stars," all of whom bring different yet excellent approaches to the teaching of writing. She reflected on her own summer experience many years earlier:

> The first year Jim really personally selected us, I was in the first summer institute. He had a lot of contact with the schools from being a supervisor. So there really wasn't a nomination

> procedure. He just selected the first 25 teachers and they were all chiefs, no Indians. Everybody was used to being a star. It's still true, a room full of chiefs, it's wonderful. (Interview, 1986)

These procedures of selection are coupled with other ceremonies and rituals designed to develop fraternal bonds among the teachers. For example, the Bay Area Writing Project staff invite the teachers chosen for that summer's institute to a springtime luncheon at which the summer program is described. This takes place in a carefully chosen context, the University of California-Berkeley Faculty Club. This building, sitting atop a hill on the Berkeley campus, is redolent of literary images of pipe-smoking academics perusing thick volumes as they burrow into chintz-covered corners. The location of the Faculty Club for this luncheon is important. It communicates to teachers the venerable traditions of the campus and the honor bestowed upon them as participants in the National Writing Project.

Participants in the Wisconsin Writing Project summer institute do not enjoy a Berkeley Faculty Club luncheon as an auspicious beginning to their summer. Yet, this summer institute is also replete with ceremony. Each day the WWP summer institute begins with volunteer participants' reading of the daily log of the prior day's activities. Teachers with the responsibility for the log create summaries; the log takes the form of poetry, song, or dramatic reading on frequent occasions and often lasts far longer than its scheduled 10 to 15 minutes. Participants also alternate in bringing special food treats for the enjoyment of their peers. These are shared as a breakfast at the beginning of each day and are accompanied by staff-made coffee. The final morning of the four-week Wisconsin institute is set aside for awards and certificates of participation with the institute director acknowledging some special quality or contribution of each teacher.

Specially designed t-shirts with that summer's participant-designed project logo are mailed to the teachers early in the autumn.

Rituals and ceremony may also be used to build a sense of community in other NWP sites. While the particular character of each NWP-affiliated site may differ, each project is launched by Gray with a common set of guidelines and an on-site visit. Further, these common characteristics have been compiled into a sort of "do-it-yourself" guide to the writing project model by Daniels and Zemelman (1985) of the Illinois Writing Project. While not endorsed by Gray, who has purposefully not written such a text himself (Interview, 1986), the NWP "program" described by Daniels and Zemelman details the patterns of practice of many writing projects in the United States.

Expanding Professional Opportunities for Teachers

In addition to a sense of community, participants in NWP institutes often also gained a chance to change some of their instructional responsibilities. Many acquired greater involvement in inservice education, in district curriculum leadership, or in activities spanning several districts. For some teachers, these new opportunities renewed their commitment to education.

As teachers work in the summer institutes Gray (Interview, 1986) says they develop and practice presentations to be offered later to teachers in their area. While some teachers do not immediately become proficient at speaking and working with groups, others enjoy and are very successful at this sort of activity. These teachers become experts who share their knowledge with others. Often, their inservice presentations become a stepping stone to other opportunities for teachers.

Two past participants of the Wisconsin Writing Project summer institute illustrate the power of National Writing Project membership for career change or advancement. Both women were already recognized as good teachers of composition by their school colleagues at the time they attended the 1981 Wisconsin Writing Project summer institute. In the years following, each gave many presentations concerning effective teaching of writing to teachers at district, county, and state meetings. Each also took a turn as the project assistant for the Wisconsin Writing Project while pursuing doctoral work in the teaching of composition at the university. One woman later took a position as her suburban-rural district's director of instruction. She also now serves as the director of her state's summer camp program for gifted secondary students and is conducting research concerning her district's writing program with university colleagues.

The other woman, who was working in a city middle school, was offered her district's sole position devoted to the teaching of composition. She was recently chosen as one of 15 U.S. teachers to travel to Great Britain in the summer of 1987 for a special two-week NWP-sponsored American and British writing institute. Both women teach graduate-level courses in teaching composition through the university's extension program. These teachers may have been able to change their careers without participating in the Wisconsin Writing Project, but they saw the project as a pivotal professional experience in opening these new opportunities.

A similar story is that of a Bay Area teacher who recently chose early retirement to pursue the new and different opportunities which affiliation with the Writing Project had brought her. These included working with the California Assessment Program in writing and coordinating inservices for the Bay Area Writing Project. Another Bay Area teacher talked about her

involvement with the California mentor teacher program and how she modeled writing instruction for her colleagues in local school districts as a part of her mentoring assignment. A third principal-teacher directly linked his efforts as a teaching administrator to past participation in the BAWP. Other teachers interviewed spoke of their involvement in writing groups begun in the summer institute and sustained by a circle of people committed to writing.

Two teachers describe the impact participation in the NWP summer institutes and related activities have had on their lives. One told how it kept her in the profession:

> I feel the Writing Project has kept me in teaching and when I started, I thought maybe I'd quit and go to law school. I don't expect to stay in the same role for 30 years. With all the negative stuff about education in the last 10 years, the writing project has helped me combat any stuff I see and hear and read.

The other talked of the varied, not necessarily financial, benefits of affiliation with the project:

> It used to be you had to be an administrator to grow as a professional. You no longer have to do that. You can use your own classroom as a laboratory. I get 50 to 60 invitations a year to speak. I get letters from teachers saying I've changed their lives. It's an almost evangelical feeling. I'm not going to be wealthy as a teacher, but this rewards and recognizes me.

These teachers' testimony show how participation in the NWP has counteracted concerns about low occupational status, limited opportunities for career advancement, and inadequate personal recognition. The benefits these teachers saw in the NWP went far beyond improvement in their writing instruction.

Authenticating Teacher Lore

Earlier, I argued that the BAWP and NWP created a community of teachers with common concerns and that this community was sustained through selection

and training rituals. I also argued that the NWP network provided teachers with work-related opportunities not often found in education. In this section I explore the power of the BAWP model to validate teachers' day-to-day experiences and concomitant wisdom.

North (1987) defines lore as "the accumulated body of traditions, practices, and beliefs in terms of which Practitioners understand how writing is done, learned, and taught" (pp. 22). Further, he has described the lore of the practitioner as embodying three features: ritual, writing, and talk. Ritual includes the "patterns of practice" of English teachers, the assignment of topics, the words or phrases of feedback for those assignments, and the behavior of the teacher in particular situations--lecturing, commenting on student work, or grading papers. North defines writing as those published guides to practice, the handbooks, textbooks, and journals used for reference, teaching, and communication by practitioners. Finally, talk is just that--the oral communication of lore, that which practitioners plan to do, have done, and will do again or not based on the latest success of a particular practice. The lore of the practitioner is built upon a series of experiences or stories of what "works" with students.

BAWP co-director Caplan described the purpose of the project as

> To tap teacher knowledge, to tap the expertise happening out in the schools which might be shared across a larger audience of teachers. Kids have always had problems with writing in schools. However, there are some teachers who've made a difference as we look back over the years. In 1973 Jim [Gray] set out to find those teachers who made a difference and have them share with others what they know. It is important to have someone with chalk dust still on their hands to share with others. (Interview, 1986)

A Bay Area teacher consultant expanded on this notion:

> It [the writing project] empowers teachers as consultants and they transmit that to teachers they are inservicing. The number one purpose is to identify teachers and say "you're doing a good job and your influence needs to go beyond that."

Another teacher expressed this validation of teacher knowledge in a different way: "The writing project is and represents a body of knowledge seen through people and actual teaching practice."

The role such classroom experience in teacher education lies at the heart of recent debate concerning reforms of education for teachers. Scholars disagree about the most appropriate source of improved professional knowledge and even about whether current working conditions in schools permit improvement. The question of the source of improvement is intimately linked with broader questions about teachers' professional autonomy.

Both the Holmes Group (1986) and the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching (1986) call for a variety of reforms, including increased liberal studies requirements for preservice teachers, tiers of licensure for practitioners, and various tests of subject matter and pedagogy as a means of ensuring teachers' professional knowledge and skills while increasing teachers' professional status. The majority of such recommendations honor not the wisdom of practice, but that of the academy. While proponents of such reforms offered by Holmes and Carnegie view solutions to problems of professional knowledge, skills, and status as related to greater length and rigor of coursework and testing, other scholars view the context of the school as workplace as precluding such changes. Densmore (1986) argues that pedagogical expertise is a tangential concern as school hiring criteria continue to stress teachers' congeniality, flexibility, acquiescence to existing school norms, and technical skills of classroom management. Further, she argues that professional expertise, conceived as "involving the possession of knowledge about alternate teaching and learning processes, content knowledge, and the ability to create and design learning activities on the basis of a particular group of students," is frequently not required for teaching "as

schools as institutions do not allow such autonomy and decision-making to occur" (p. 150).

In an examination of gender and teaching, Spencer (1986) argues that teachers belong to a "quasi-profession," as the work of educators becomes ever more parallel to working-class jobs:

> Work in schools is depersonalized, options for teachers are limited, choices are narrowed, and control is limited. Teachers not only have limited control over their workplaces but have limited interaction with those in control. Therefore, teachers feel less involved, less committed, and more alienated or burned out. (p. 189)

Darling-Hammond (1985) also cites autonomy as a deterrent to increasing teacher professionalization. She writes that professionalization involves

> not only the status and compensation accorded to the members of an occupation; it involves the extent to which members of that occupation maintain control over the content of their work and the degree to which society values the work of that occupation. (p. 205)

Such autonomy is applauded by the BAWP/NWP network, as teachers' successful practices are captured and shared with others. Because the NWP network appears to applaud and validate the successful daily experiences of teachers and asks that those be shared with others, it honors teachers not as technicians but as knowledge-makers. James Gray has said that the purpose of the BAWP is

> to by design create a corps of credible, believable people teaching others about writing. . . . One of the reasons for our being is to increase the professional clout of classroom teachers. You are entering a powerful body with clout. (Interview, 1986)

Perl and Wilson (1986), in their text celebrating the work done by six teachers in the years following an NWP summer institute, refer to the "art of teaching" they had observed in action, an art which "although it consists in part of various techniques, can no more be reduced to a formula or prescription than the activity of dancing, painting, or playing the violin" (p. 247). This "art," the wedding and balancing of theory and practice, is one which

the NWP network aspires to offer all of its teacher participants, in order that they too may experience the success in teaching composition described by Perl and Wilson.

Can the National Writing Project Respond to Dual Demands for Both Professionalization and Technicalization?

Participants' reactions to their NWP experiences show that the institutes move those involved toward greater professionalization, in the sense that they gain a sense of community, opportunities to take on broader responsibilities, and an affirmation of their own professional knowledge. That achievement alone might be seen as sufficient.

One can ask, however, what the NWP might do to push teaching even closer to professionalization. What more could the NWP provide? One place to look for answers is in the agendas of other would-be improvers of teaching. One repeated theme is the need to make teachers more knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and about research on effective teaching methods. Current NWP practices do not respond to these perceived needs, yet the introduction of such content would be compatible with the other NWP aims. The NWP summer institutes could continue to honor the wisdom of practice while adding attention to the literature of research methodologies, composition, or staff development. Such a curriculum would include attention to the history of the teaching of English; the methodology of research paradigms and examples of their use in teaching composition; an introduction to the literature concerning staff development and that of action research, as well as continued attention to models of composition and their classroom implementation.

Indeed, if all composition teachers are to develop status as professionals, as knowledge-makers in education, practitioners must learn to develop the "new kinds of knowledge produced by new kinds of inquiry" laid

forth in the 1962 report of the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on the Status of Knowledge About Composition (North, 1987). In the 25 years since the NCTE Committee reported its findings, practitioners and their students have often been the objects of, and on a few occasions collaborators with, the directors of these studies (Graves, 1982; Perl and Wilson, 1986). Yet, practitioners' voices are rarely heard apart from such university-sponsored collaboration in research.

One promising methodology, alternately termed action research, classroom inquiry, and teacher research, offers teachers the opportunity to be researchers while working in their own classrooms and to test and articulate their ideas, making connections between theory and practice. Examples of opportunities for classroom teachers to frame questions, search for answers and test assumptions have been described by a number of British, American, and Australian researchers (Atwell, 1982; Britton, 1987; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Mohr, 1980, 1987). Such inquiry can be one way to transform a school into a "community of thinkers" (Boomer, 1987). Goswami and Stillman (1987) cite six positive outcomes of such inquiry by teachers.

1. Their teaching is transformed in important ways: They become theorists, articulating their intentions, testing their assumptions, and finding connections with practice.
2. Their perceptions of themselves as writers and teachers are transformed. They step up their use of resources; they form networks; and they become more active professionally.
3. They become rich resources who can provide the profession with information it simply doesn't have. They can observe closely, over long periods of time, with special insights and knowledge. Teachers know their classrooms and students in ways that outsiders can't.

4. They become critical, responsive readers and users of current research, less apt to accept uncritically others' theories, less vulnerable to fads, and more authoritative in their assessment of curricula, methods, and materials.
5. They can study writing and learning and report their findings without spending large sums of money (although they must have support and recognition). Their studies, while probably not definitive, taken together should help us develop and assess writing curricula in ways that are outside the scope of specialists and external evaluators.
6. They collaborate with their students to answer questions important to both, drawing on community resources in new and unexpected ways. The nature of teacher-student relations changes when inquiry begins. Working with teachers to answer real questions increases students' motivation to talk, read, and write and has the potential for helping them achieve mature language skills.

If such research methods were explicitly a part of all NWP network summer institutes, more talented teachers of writing might learn to engage in the deliberate, self-conscious search for knowledge in their classrooms. The already-established NWP communities could also provide the support required for sustained inquiry.

Other additions should also be considered, including encouraging local groups of teachers to start planning prior to the opening of the summer institute. Such prior planning and decision making between teachers and administrators at the local classroom and district level, focusing on problems to be investigated or projects and goals to be fulfilled, has been a hallmark of successful staff development practices (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; Lieberman and Miller, 1979; Little, 1984; McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978).

Such a "user focus" for the summer institutes would not only prepare teachers to consider the problems to be investigated in the summer but would also facilitate their implementation of plans in the following autumn. Time in the summer institute could be set aside for teachers from the same districts or those with similar interests and problems to focus on mutual concerns and plan action research projects and curriculum changes. This time could also be used to nurture development of needed feedback mechanisms. Attention to the provision of an ongoing community of support with feedback incorporated into the design of research and curriculum change has been cited as critical to the successful implementation of change (Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978). As participants in the NWP summer institutes forge their plans of action for the autumn, they could also be developing those networks of feedback critical to successful curriculum reform as well as to successful research.

These suggested modifications of the curriculum of the NWP summer institutes are not designed to fulfill the program of any single group calling for reform. Rather, they are designed to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to understand why their good practices work, to test and challenge ideas of their own and others, to explain and argue their own practices to others, and to rebut critiques from their detractors. Teachers <u>can</u> conduct research which informs their own practice and that of others. Teachers <u>can</u> plan and work collaboratively with their classroom peers and with administrators to effect change. Teachers <u>are</u> knowledge-makers and deserve the time, resources, and the tools to construct, implement, and test plans of excellence and to disseminate that knowledge--the wisdom gained from meshing theory <u>with</u> practice.

Conclusion

The National Writing Project is a network of 166 sites in 46 of the United States and six foreign nations. Teachers affiliated with this project offer some form of staff development to approximately 85,000 teachers each year (Phone conversation with Smith, 1987). The National Writing Project holds great appeal for teachers. It honors their work, seeks their stories, urges them to share these with others.

In this essay, I argue that the benefits participants see in the NWP do not lie exclusively (or perhaps even primarily) in the improvement of their writing instruction but instead in the increased professionalism that comes with a sense of community, with an increase in the variety of professional responsibility, and with an increased appreciation of their knowledge about teaching. The NWP, with its series of staff development opportunities culminating in participation in the summer institute, offers teachers the satisfactions of professional advancement while providing new options and directions for their careers previously not available to the majority of classroom teachers. The continuing stable nature of the project, its provision of newsletters and meetings, offers a network of support for its clientele. The positive publicity generated about the project in the popular press and educational literature provides the solace sought by teachers, too often cited as the cause of our nation's ethics and literacy woes.

Teacher-participants of NWP summer institutes now benefit individually from their project affiliation. The wisdom of their practice is validated and honored; they are members of an elite community within teaching; they receive opportunities for work and learning beyond the classroom door. The NWP has provided leadership in acknowledging and disseminating the wisdom of their practice.

Yet the National Writing Project could do even more. The project could remain concerned primarily with seeking the best classroom work in composition and providing a framework for those teachers to share that practice with their peers, or the NWP can subsume this focus within another which more clearly defines for teachers the historical, methodological, and pedagogical context within which they work. This expanded focus in no way demeans the past practices of NWP summer institutes. Rather, the changed focus and curricula of the institutes would be reflective of enduring questions and problems concerning the roles of those involved in the educational enterprise and respond to current tensions in the fields of teacher education and staff development.

References

Atwell, N. (1982). Class-based writing research: Teachers can learn from students. English Journal, 71, 84-87.

Bay Area Writing Project Staff. (1983). National Writing Project evaluation portfolio. Berkeley: University of California, School of Education.

Berthoff, A. E. (1981). The making of meaning. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Boomer, G. (1987). Addressing the problem of elsewhereness: A case for action research in schools. In D. Goswami and P. Stillman (Eds.), Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change (pp. 4-13). Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A., and Rosen, H. (1975). The development of writing abilities. London: Macmillan.

Britton, J. (1987). A quiet form of research. In D. Goswami and P. Stillman (Eds.), Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change (pp. 13-19). Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Carnegie Task Force on Teaching. (1986). A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century. New York: Author.

Carr. W., and Kemmis, S. (1986). Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research. London: Falmer Press.

Daniels, H., and Zemelman, S. (1985). A writing project: Training teachers of composition from kindergarten to college. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1985). Valuing teachers: The making of a profession. Teachers College Record, 87, 205-218.

Densmore, K. (1987). Professionalism, proletarianization, and teacher work. In T. S. Popkewitz (Ed.), (1987) Critical studies in teacher education: Its folklore, theory and practice (pp. 130-160). Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis.

Edelman, M. (1975). Language, myths, and rhetoric. Society, 12(5), 14-21.

Effrat, M. P. (1974). Approaches to community: Conflicts and complementarities. In M.P. Effrat (Ed.), The community: Approaches and applications (pp. 1-32). New York: Free Press.

Emig, J. (1971). The composing process of twelfth graders. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Emig, J. (1982). Writing, composition, and rhetoric. In H. E. Mitzel (Ed.), Encyclopedia of educational research (pp. 2021-2036). London: Free Press.

Fullan, M., and Pomfret, A. (1977). Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. Review of Educational Research, 47, 335-397.

Gere, A. R. (1986). Teaching writing: The major theories. In A.R. Petrosky and D. Bartholomae (Eds.), The teaching of writing (pp. 30-48). Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Goswami, D., and Stillman, P. (Eds.). (1987). Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Graves, D. H. (1982). Writing: Teachers and children at work. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Griffin, G. A. (1986). Thinking about teaching. In K. K. Zumwalt (Ed.), Improving teaching (pp. 101-114). Alexandria, VA: Association for School Curriculum and Development.

Hillocks, G., Jr. (1986). Research on written composition: New directions for teaching. New York: National Conference on Research on English.

The Holmes Group (1986). Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group. East Lansing, MI: Author.

Lieberman, A., and Miller, L. (1984). Teachers, their world, and their work: Implications for school improvement. Alexandria, VA: Association for School and Curriculum Development.

Little, J.W. (1984). Seductive images and organizational realities in professional development. Teachers College Record, 86, 84-102.

Lortie, D. (1975). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McDiarmid, G.W., and Ball, D.L. (1987). Keeping track of teacher learning. Unpublished manuscript, National Center for Research on Teacher Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing.

McLaren, P. (1986). Schooling as a ritual performance. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

McLaughlin, M.N., and Marsh, D. (1978). Staff development and school change. Teachers College Record, 80, 69-84.

Moffett, J. (1973). A student-centered language arts curriculum. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Moffett, J. (1968). Teaching the universe of discourse. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Mohr, M. (1980). The teacher as researcher. Virginia English Bulletin, 30(2), 61-64.

Mohr, M. (1987). Teacher researchers and the study of the writing process. In D. Goswami and P. Stillman, (Eds.), Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change (pp. 94-106). Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

North, S. M. (1987). The making of knowledge in composition: Portrait of an emerging field. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Perl, S. and Wilson, N. (1986). Through teachers' eyes: Portraits of writing teachers at work. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sarason, S., Levine, M., Goldenberg, I.I., Cherlin, D.L., and Bennett, E.M. (1966). Teaching is a lonely profession. In S. Sarason (Ed.), Psychology in community settings: Clinical, educational, vocational, social aspects (pp. 74-97). New York: Wiley.

Spencer, D.A. (1986). Contemporary women teachers: Balancing home and school. New York: Longman.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESPONSES

Mary M. Kennedy[5]

The National Center for Research on Teacher Education (NCRTE) is, as its name implies, primarily a research organization. Yet we recognize that many important questions about teacher education are not empirical. The task of educating teachers often requires teacher educators to adopt a view of what teachers should know and be able to do, which in turn entails a view of how pupils learn, of what good teaching looks like, and of how teachers learn to teach. Though research can contribute to our thinking on all of these matters, important value judgments are always entailed in designing approaches to teacher education.

Recognizing the importance of these judgments in teacher education, the NCRTE has taken as one of its goals to make teacher educators more self-conscious and explicit about the assumptions they make: assumptions about the qualities of an ideal teacher, about the sources of teachers' knowledge about teaching, and about the ways in which teacher educators can and cannot facilitate good teaching.

To that end, we want to promote serious discussion about fundamental issues of teacher education. We hope that such discussions will heighten all teacher educator's awareness of their own assumptions and perhaps unspoken goals, and that it may help them consider alternative ways of thinking about their task.

Mary Gomez's paper represents an occasion for such discussion, and so we have asked three representatives from the National Writing Project to respond

---

[5]Mary Kennedy is director of the National Center for Research on Teacher Education.

to her paper. Following their responses is Gomez's reaction. We hope this conversation proves useful to other teacher educators who struggle with similar tensions in their own thinking.

RESPONSE TO GOMEZ

James Gray[6]

The National Writing Project is a mammoth undertaking. Not only is the number of new affiliated sites constantly increasing--five universities are conducting their first NWP Invitational Summer Institutes in 1988 and others are planning new sites for 1989 start-up dates--but new sites once established also continue to grow and increase their number of program offerings. In short, it is difficult to capture the nature and complexity of this very large international project in one short written piece. Mary Gomez describes the NWP by commenting on three major dimensions of the project, that is, the ongoing support groups and communities it establishes, its recognition of the knowledge and expertise of exemplary teachers, and its determination to expand the professional role of classroom teachers, and then concludes her piece with a series of recommendations that she believes would further strengthen the project.

Mary captures much about the project, for example, the positive response of teachers to a project that celebrates good teaching, the power of the expanding writing project community, the many doors the project has opened for teacher-leaders; but there is so much more that Mary does not touch upon at all or mentions only in passing, as well as a few statements that I would want to qualify.

- Mary gives little or no attention to our major reason for starting the project in the first place, that is, to counter the historical neglect of writing in the nation's schools: Teachers

---

[6]James Gray is founder of the Bay Area Writing Project, director of the California and National Writing projects, and faculty member in the School of Education at University of California, Berkeley.

were not trained to teach writing, little writing was going on in most schools, and teachers were unaware of the uses of writing as learning.

- That the National Writing Project places such great importance on the need to have writing teachers write should receive major attention in any piece that presents the project. NWP teachers demonstrate their best practices to each other in the summer institutes, but they also write a great deal and experience the process of writing at first hand! They also spend most afternoons in the institute in editing/response groups, reading and discussing each others' written pieces. For many NWP participants the power of the project lies in this attention to writing teachers' writing.
- Also central to the writing project model is the belief that the best teacher of another teacher is a successful and informed classroom teacher, someone who can demonstrate to other teachers specific practices and approaches that have proven effective in real classrooms with real students. These teacher consultants of the National Writing Project, the teachers carefully selected for participation in the summer institutes and trained to work effectively with other teachers, are believable to teachers in ways that non-classroom teachers can never be. The National Writing Project is known, I believe, primarily for this teacher-teaching-teacher idea and model.
- Mary refers to the curriculum of the project and makes the same mistake that George Hillocks (1986) did in identifying the project with but one single approach to the teaching of writing.

That writing is a process is a given, and writing project teacher consultants are doing their best introducing other teachers to the importance of first drafts, peer review, and above all, to the importance of revisions. But teaching is an art form and effective teachers are successful in so many different ways, and the writing project is open to all of these successful practices. As important as writing as a process is to reform in the teaching of writing, the National Writing Project will always be open to good practice that produces good writing whatever that practice might be.

- Finally, the NWP site directors agree with Mary on the importance of action research or teacher research, and along with Bread Loaf[7] and individual teachers such as Dixie Goswami (Goswami and Stillman,1987) and Nanie Atwell,[8] the NWP has already played a major role in promoting and supporting this key movement in the education of a classroom teacher. The National Council of Teachers of English (Urbana, Illinois) has published two works on teacher research written by NWP teacher consultants, one in 1985, The Teacher Researcher: How to Study Writing in the Classroom by Miles Myers (Bay Area Writing Project) and the other in 1987, Working Together: A Guide for

---

[7]The Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, in Middlebury, Vermont, hosts a summer writing program for teachers.

[8]Nancie Atwell, formerly an eighth-grade teacher in the Boothbay Region Elementary School, Boothbay Harbor, Maine, has edited with Thomas Newkirk the 1988 volume Understanding Writing: Ways of Observing, Learning, and Teaching (2nd ed.). (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann) and is the author of In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton\Cook, 1987)

Teacher-Researchers by Marian M. Mohr and Marion S. Maclean (Northern Virginia Writing Project). The Center for the Study of Writing (CSW)[9] supports NWP teacher research through its research application series, and NWP projects across the country have received private and public funding to support teachers engaged in teacher research.

---

[9]The Center for the Study of Writing is housed at the University of California at Berkeley and at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. It is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

References

Goswami, D., and Stillman, P. (Eds.). (1987). Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change. Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton\Cook.

Hillocks, G., Jr. (1986). Research on written composition: New directions for teaching. New York: National Conference on Research on English.

RESPONSE TO GOMEZ

Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman[10]

Mary Gomez pictures the National Writing Project as a unique, far-reaching, unapologetically elitist institution, more concerned with boosting the egos of hand-picked "star" teachers than with actual school change or educational renewal. If this is an accurate picture, then the NWP clearly needs some renewal itself. But surprisingly, the main improvement Gomez recommends in the NWP model is increased indoctrination of participants in the "venerable traditions of the campus," by teaching them more research methodology in summer institutes. As co-directors of one of the 166 projects in the NWP network, we agree that the Project ought to be celebrated, but not for the attributes which Gomez highlights. And while we share her belief that growth and reform are needed within the NWP, our own reform agenda is quite different.

Dr. Gomez's research focuses almost entirely upon the immediate and universal reactions of participants completing five-week invitational summer institutes. All of us who have conducted such programs are familiar with the intense quasi-religious fervor of teachers emerging from this trial by fire (or by un-air-conditioned dormitory). It's not by accident that Writing Project summer boot camp graduates talk in language of "conversion," "getting the word," "preaching the gospel," and the like. (Indeed, the headlines of the NWP/CSW newsletter are regularly laced with such theological vocabulary.) It is extremely odd, however, that Gomez says almost nothing about the

---

[10]Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman are co-directors of the Illinois Writing Project and authors of A Community of Writers (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988). Daniels is chair of the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois. Zemelman is professor of humanities at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

content or process of this indisputably powerful experience. What goes on in these institutes? What reading? What writing? What sharing? What discussing and debating? What instructional strategies are advocated, modelled, or designed? It seems that any useful description of the NWP would start with what and how it teaches teachers, yet these topics are almost completely absent from the paper.

It's important to be clear about what the Project is and does, because many staff development programs create "converts." Indeed, to be completely romantic for a moment, almost all invitational summer institutes have a special intensity and personal closeness for participating teachers. Physics institutes, humanities institutes, home economics institutes--all have great emotional power and tend to conclude in a burst of self-confidence and collegial affection.

But the important question is not how teachers feel about themselves and each other in August, but what they do in September, December, second semester, and years down the road. The true payoff of any summer institute happens back in schools and classrooms, where teachers try out new methods and spread ideas among their colleagues through formal workshops or informal contact. If the National Writing Project deserves its reputation as a singular resource for teacher renewal, then it ought to be demonstrably changing classroom practice, revitalizing school buildings, and contributing to a wave of true progressive educational reform in this country--12 months a year.

Gomez doesn't show that any of these larger issues are of interest to the NWP. But we know that for many projects in the network, progressive school change is our overarching goal, and many affiliates reject the NWP's elitist stance. In the Illinois Writing Project, for example, we do not

restrict our programs to only the "creme de la creme," the "chiefs," or the "stars." We do not require written applications, recommendation letters, screening interviews with college faculty members, or ceremonial lunches at the university faculty club. We work with whoever wants to be a better writing teacher or a resource to other teachers.

We think that the preoccupation with summer institutes in both NWP practice and Gomez's paper stresses the flashiest and easiest aspect of the teacher renewal process. Almost anyone can run an inspiring five-week summer institute. The harder and chancier job is following up teachers back in the schools, supporting change in or close to the classroom, troubleshooting the problems, sustaining morale and commitment, spreading ideas to other teachers, working with parents and administrators. Again, we know of many sites in the NWP that put most of their energy toward these efforts.

In our own project, we don't use the long summer institute model any more. We have separated our workshop series devoted to writing into two 30-hour phases and now offer most of our courses during the year in schools. In the 1987-88 school year, for example, we ran 65 such school-based inservice programs. After teachers have been through each of these courses, we try to design follow-up activities that will help new models of writing instruction become rooted in the culture of each school.

We still do train our prospective leaders in the summer, but because they have already taken the prior workshops and applied ideas in their classrooms, they only need seven additional days to prepare as leaders. This past year, we ran two sections of our Leadership Institute, preparing about 50 new teacher-consultants. Of course these new teacher-consultants still experience some fervor--but it's a fervor primarily focused upon the work they're committed to do back in the schools--not gloating over how the summer

institute somehow certifies them as better than some other group of teachers. Next year and the years after that, these teacher-consultants will be able to help hundreds of other teachers develop process writing and, more generally, student-centered instruction in their classrooms.

We're not trying to sanctify our own particular model or sell it to anyone else. It works for us right now, but we've only been tinkering with it for 11 years and we know there is lots of growth ahead. So while we wouldn't presume to suggest specific reforms for the NWP, we find Gomez's key recommendations quite disturbing. Of course, it's easily argued and even possible that making teachers into researchers in their own classrooms can be potentially liberating and empowering. But we should always be especially vigilant when people recommend that we become more like them--in this case, when a university researcher suggests that classroom teachers ought to act more like university researchers. Teachers come to a Writing Project site initially because they are concerned or curious or frustrated about teaching writing to their students. They do not, generally, come in hopes of finding a good research methods course. We must meet their announced needs and expectations first, before we start providing things <u>we</u> think might "be good for them."

More broadly, we are certain that the last thing the NWP needs is to become more university-like. After all, the NWP <u>originated</u> because the "venerable traditions of the campus" had failed teachers completely. Writing projects started and spread because the traditional teacher-training institutions--the colleges and universities--had failed to prepare teachers to teach writing. In fact, the NWP has arisen as a kind of surrogate national university offering courses which the universities failed to provide--and

still generally fail to provide--even though the Project has shown them how for 15 years.

As we review 15 years of remarkable accomplishments by the 166 affiliated writing projects, by the many independent projects (such as Jim Davis's Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa and Lucy Calkins's Teachers College Writing Project at Columbia University), by the larger network that is the NWP, and by the wider movement called process writing, we must be sure that we celebrate the true strengths and reform the real weaknesses. Gomez's article doesn't help us do either very well.

MARY GOMEZ RESPONDS TO GRAY

I will react to two points which James Gray makes in his response to my work. First, he asserts that I make the same mistake George Hillocks makes in identifying the National Writing Project with a single approach to the teaching of writing. To my knowledge, the approach to the teaching of writng advocated by the NWP and its affiliates is a process approach. While there appear to be allowances for any individual teacher's shaping of the model, no other model is sanctioned.

Second, Gray states "NWP site directors agree with Mary on the importance of action research or teacher research" (p.31). Yet, the response to my work by Daniels and Zemelman, co-directors of the Illinois Writing Project, denies the significance of action research for writing project participants. I suggest no general commitment to teachers engaging in classroom research exists in the NWP affiliates. Rather, I suggest that most affiliate site priorities remain induction of participants into a process approach to the teaching of writing and the training of teachers to offer inservice to their peers.

Last, I wish to acknowledge the fine work of James Gray and his NWP colleagues, in the United States and beyond its borders, who have made the teaching of writing, across the grades and across the curriculum, a priority. James Gray is to be commended for his important conceptual work in staff development.

MARY GOMEZ RESPONDS TO DANIELS AND ZEMELMAN

Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman make a number of assertions regarding my analysis of the staff development program of the National Writing Project and its affiliates:

1. They state that I picture the National Writing Project as an elitist institution more concerned with boosting the egos of selected teachers that with school change and educational renewal.

Nowhere in my paper is this charge substantiated. I acknowledge the carefully screened selection process present in the Bay Area Writing Project. I assert that the National Writing Project needs to focus greater attention to how change is effected in schools and to educate teachers for the roles of change agent. Such attention to successful strategies for school change is important regardless of the way participants are selected. Teacher-participants of the NWP need to become skilled change agents as well as excellent presenters of information if changes in school climate and practices are to occur. I am uncertain this can occur unless attention to the challenges of planned school change are addressed in the institutes or in follow-up experiences.

I do not know the content of the Leadership Institutes of the Illinois Writing Project. While I am skeptical that "only seven days" are needed to prepare teachers as leaders (of what, to do what job is unclear) in the Illinois Writing Project, I commend the efforts of Daniels' and Zemelman's to address issues of staff development.

2. They state that I suggest teachers need to become more like university researchers. This is not the case. Rather, I suggest teachers have the right to access to the tools of the "academy" and

to enjoy the reading and discussion related to these tools as the myths and mystique of "research" are laid bare.

Most important, I advocate that teachers become teacher-researchers and engage in action research, a process Girth Boomer (1987) calls "learning deliberately." Miles Myers (1985) refers tothis activity as "any study conducted by teachers of their school system, school, class, groups of students, or one student, either collaboratively or individually" (p.5). These teachers talk of teacher research as deliberately taking a closer look at one's own activity and at that of the students in one's classes. Such activity helps teachers sustain their efforts at change in teaching practices and helps teachers uncover the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching.

This summer I encouraged the 30 (K-12) teacher-participants, in a four-week, open, "intensive" summer institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (the eleventh summer of the Wisconsin Writing Project), to write personal staff development plans for the 1988-89 school year. These plans were designed to help teachers accomplish two goals: to implement changed practices of writing instruction in their classrooms and to evaluate the success of these plans though multiple criteria. Further, at the initiation of the teachers, plans for three one-day follow-up meetings in the autumn, winter, and spring of 1988-89 have been made. These occasions will allow participants to share their ongoing struggles with curriculum change in a supportive environment of peers. Teachers will, in these follow-up visits, receive the sort of feedback and support for their efforts which are critical to sustain successful innovation.

I wish to note that individual teachers' staff development plans were developed in conjunction with peers who were interested in similar curriculum challenges. Among the activities conducted by these groups was the reading

of Marian M. Mohr and Marion S. Maclean's (the Northern Virginia Writing Project) Working Together: A Guide for Teacher-Researchers (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1987).

3. Daniels and Zemelman state my research rests "almost entirely upon the immediate and universal reactions of participants completing five-week invitational institutes." This is false. My data derive from multiple sources:

   a. an ethnographic study (spanning more than one semester in 1985-86) in which I followed four secondary teachers (back to their classrooms) after they had participated in the 1985 summer institute of the Wisconsin Writing Project.

   b. one-to two-hour interviews with each of 11 teacher-participants of the Bay Area Writing Project (all of whom had participated in the BAWP summer institute from one to ten years prior to my December 1986 visit to the U-Berkeley campus).

   c. one-to two-hour interviews of six past Wisconsin Writing Project participants (who had participated in the WWP summer institutes from one to seven years prior to my summer 1987 interviews).

   d. one-to two-hour interviews of six teachers who were then enrolled in the 1987 Wisconsin Writing Project summer institute; and most recently,

   e. A year-long follow-up study of a fourth-grade teacher who had participated in the (1987) summer institute of the Wisconsin Writing Project in 1987-88.

4. I am unclear as to the source of Daniels and Zemelman's use of the term "gloating" to describe behaviors of teacher-participants

of NWP-affiliated writing projects. This is neither a term I use nor a picture of any teachers I find true or useful.

Finally, my argument is not designed to describe the well known curriculum of the NWP. Rather, it is designed to (a) unpack multiple reasons the NWP is so fruitful an experience for so many teachers and (b) to call for a reexamination of the NWP staff development model so that attention is allocated to teachers as researchers and change agents.

References

Boomer, G. (1987). Addressing the problem of elsewhereness: A case for action research in schools. In D. Goswami and P. Stillman (Eds.), Reclaiming the classroom: Teacher research as an agency for change (pp. 4-13). Upper Montclair, NJ: Boyton/Cook.

Myers, M. (1985). The teacher-researcher: How to study writing in the classroom. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.